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ABSTRACT

The report of the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration recommended that educational administration preparation programs be planned around five strands--including supervised practice consisting of short- and long-term internships directed by research faculty and practitioners who are clinical faculty members. This idea is not new. However, recent research suggests that without conceptual foundations for developing internship programs, internships may fail from lack of articulation and definition. This paper proposes an internship model anchored in adult learning and development theory and often termed "androgogy." After reviewing the literature and discussing alternative instructional approaches for adults, the paper describes a theoretical framework based on six andragogical assumptions: the need to know, the learner's self-concept, the role of the learner's experience, readiness to learn, a life-centered learning orientation, and internal motivation for learning. The paper briefly describes the traditional internship and proposes a new internship model designed to integrate the formal knowledge of administration preparation programs with field experiences through a developmental process encouraging learner involvement and reflection. This model is defined by three distinct levels of structured activity (reactive, interactive, and active), each increasing in degree of student participation. The model assumes that schools will become full partners in administrative preparation. Use of adult learning principles may enhance the theory-research-practice relationship as coursework relevancy and applicability are related to practice. Included are 15 references. (MLH)

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THE INTERNSHIP: AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to propose a model for the internship in educational administration that is anchored in adult learning theory. The paper also includes a discussion of the implications of this integrated internship program for the field of educational administration.

Introduction

A recent report of the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (1987) recommended that educational administration preparation programs be planned around five strands --- including "supervised practice" (p. 19). The report suggested that this supervised practice should consist of "short and long-term internships under the direction of research faculty and practitioners who were clinical faculty members" (p. 18). The report further emphasized that the training of practicing administrators should be different from the training of researchers "because it must emphasize the application of knowledge and skills in clinical rather than academic situations" (p. 19).

The importance of applying knowledge to practice through internship experiences may revive and underscore an old theme. For instance, Newell (in Davies, 1962) said, "The fact that internships are proving themselves to be highly valuable in an administrator's preparation gives rise to the belief that the time will come when they will be considered indispensable." These words demonstrate the high expectations held of internship experiences as preparation for professional practice in educational administration a quarter century ago. The suggestions put forth in Leaders for America's Schools

(1987) affirm the continued relevance of those expectations today.

However, Briner (1963) suggested that without conceptual foundations for the development of internship programs, internships may fail from lack of articulation and definition. A theoretical framework from which internships may be conceptualized is adult learning and development theory. Theory and research on adult learning patterns may prove valuable for designing internship and field experiences. Further, this framework may provide the field of educational administration with a stable theoretical foundation to guide preparation programs over time.

Consequently, the purpose of this paper is to propose a model for the internship in educational administration that is anchored in adult learning theory, often termed andragogy. Implications for the field of educational administration will then be discussed.

Related Literature

Researchers interested in the internship and field experiences in educational administration have amassed a large body of literature over the last twenty-five years. However, little of this research addresses the uniqueness of adult learners. [For a description of

books, monographs, journal articles, dissertations, and technical reports, see Daresh, Gallagher, & Balmores (1987).]

Theorists interested in the adult learning process suggest that certain characteristics of adults require alternative instructional methodologies to those traditionally used (Friere, 1972; Knowles, 1979, 1980, 1984; Mezirlow, 1981; Rogers, 1969). Specifically, experiential learning is a central focus of nearly all the theorists because of the finding that adults learn most effectively when the learning process is in response to a problem or need. Additionally, each theorist emphasizes certain specific factors related to adult learning. For instance, Rogers (1969) suggests that the maturation process of the learner plays a significant part in the education of adults, whereas Mezirlow (1981) suggests that the process of reflection has great significance in the adult learning process. Friere (1972) proposes that cultural change is an important factor in adult learning.

Researchers from areas other than adult learning touch on the issues of processing and integrating information through experience. For example, Schon (1983) contends that practice is "reflection in action", and Usher and Bryant (1987) posit that practice is in

some respects "generated theory". These views suggest that the field experiences of practitioners not only may enhance leadership development, but also may impact on theory development in educational administration.

Theoretical Framework

The traditionally accepted method of instruction in most educational programs is pedagogical ---that is, it is teacher directed and the information provided to the learner is intended for current storage and later use. The pedagogical model of education evolved from beliefs about teaching and learning developed between the seventh and twelfth centuries from instructional methods used with young students in European monasteries. Adopted by the secular school, pedagogy became and has remained the dominant model of education (Knowles, 1984).

One alternative to the pedagogical model of instruction is a model described by Knowles (1979, 1980, 1984) as andragogy. Andragogy, sometimes referred to as an integrative or unified theory of adult learning, emphasizes the adult learner's knowledge development through more self-directed means, with more focus on learning that is relevant and applicable to current experience and problem-solving. The andragogical model assumes certain differences between the characteristics

of adult learners and children. Although the principles of this model could be and have been successfully used to teach young students --- especially adolescents (Knowles, 1984, p.61-63), this model is designed to address the uniqueness of adult learners. Knowles outlines six assumptions of andragogy that are different from those of pedagogy:

1) **The need to know.** Adult learners seek out the importance attributed to a learning task before undertaking the task of learning. They need to understand why it is important to learn something, rather than simply that it is required of the teacher to earn a grade.

2) **The learner's self concept.** Adults need to be seen as capable of self-direction because they see themselves as responsible for their own lives. They do not require the dependence of children.

3) **The role of the learner's experience.** Mature individuals accumulate an expanding reservoir of experience which becomes an exceedingly rich resource in learning. Adults have a greater quantity as well as a different quality of experiences from which to draw in the learning process than do children.

4) **Readiness to learn.** Adults become ready to learn those things they need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their current real-life situations.

5) **Orientation to learning.** Adults learn more effectively when knowledge, skills, attitudes, and understandings are presented in the context of application to real-life situations. Adults are more life-centered (or task-centered or problem-centered), whereas children are more subject-centered (at least in school).

6) Motivation. Adults are more responsive to internal sources of motivation (e.g. job satisfaction, self-esteem, or quality of life) than to external sources of motivation (e.g. salary or promotion). Adults are motivated to continue growing and developing unless blocked by other barriers (e.g. negative self-concept as a student, time constraints, inaccessibility of opportunities or resources, or programs that violate principles of adult learning). (Knowles, 1984, pp. 55-61).

These understandings of the adult learner and consequent principles of adult learning have profound implications for the instructional process (Jarvis, 1982) and for those designing instructional programs for adults. Knowles (1980) advocates that adult learners should help design their learning experiences, and that these instructional experiences have continuity, sequence, and integration with the learner's life experience. He further maintains that the instructor should provide not only substantive material, but also procedural information, and should join with the students in both an evaluation of the process and re-diagnosis of future learning needs. Thus, andragogical methods pose the learner as an active explorer in the learning process, participating in every stage, with instructors as resource persons for both content and process.

The Traditional Internship

Davies (1962) provides an analysis of the traditional internship and its relation to other components of the preparation program. The internship is represented as an intense culminating phase of professional preparation that provides the future administrator with an opportunity to develop competence in fulfilling comprehensive administrative responsibilities. The internship is typically completed at or near the end of the preparation program and is sharply partitioned from other learning experiences in the preparation program. Another type of field experience, the apprenticeship, is described as an opportunity to assess the desire and probability of a student to enter administration, prior to a full commitment to a preparation program or the profession. The purpose of an apprenticeship is to provide career guidance to educators who have, as yet, had little or no formal training in administration, but who want to explore the career as a professional alternative (Davies, 1962). The type of experiences and responsibilities associated with these two program components are intended to be dramatically different from one another in order to fulfill their differing objectives.

The Integrated Internship

As discussed in the literature, the proponents of andragogy place tremendous emphasis on such factors as the relevance and applicability of the learning experience to current life situations and problem-solving, the role of the learner in self-directed learning activities, the development and maturation process of the individual, and the opportunities for reflection and experiential learning. We suggest that these ideas about mature learners and conditions for enhancing their learning experiences serve as the conceptual framework for this internship model.

The proposed internship (intended for the preparation of practicing administrators) is designed to integrate the formal knowledge of preparation programs with field experiences through a developmental process which offers opportunities for learner involvement and reflection. The internship is conceptualized as the total set of field experiences that accompanies the coursework of any administrative preparation program, but requires gradually increasing involvement of the developing leader through various phases of field activity.

The proposed model for the preparation of practicing administrators stresses the integration of

formal and experiental learning as an on-going process (see Figure 1). The internship is defined by three distinct levels of structured activity (see the triangle of Figure 1), each increasing in student participation. These levels, moving from reactive (strata 1) to interactive (strata 2) to active (strata 3) learner involvement, represent the learner's transition from receptive to expressive activities. Further, each level of involvement in field activites is accompanied by some form of formal assessment and seminar so that colleaguiality and reflection can be enhanced.

The formal knowledge preparation of required and elective courses, although not a primary concern of this paper, requires that coursework be sequenced in tandem with field experiences (see the rectangle of Figure 1). One possible plan might include a progression of coursework from introductory and overview material (strata 1) to theoretical foundations of organizational behavior (strata 2) to technical knowledge and research techniques (strata 3). Electives may be either interspersed or related to the field activity in each of the levels of the internship model.

One assumption of this model is that schools will serve as partners in administrative preparation. As consistent with the Commission report (1987), field

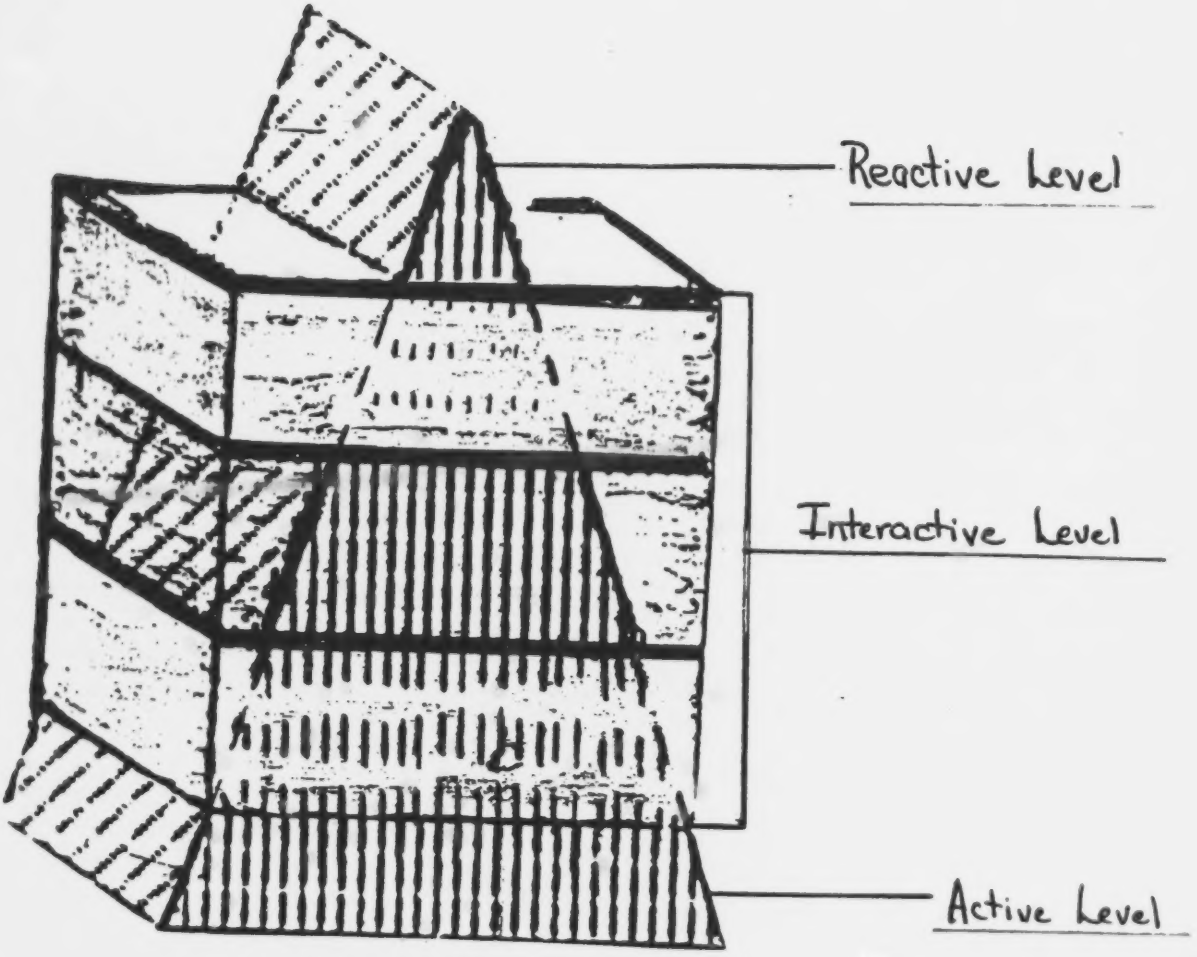

Figure 1. Depiction of on-going process integrating formal and experiential learning.

experiences necessarily require the participation of the schools in administrative preparation by: 1) engaging in recruitment activities; 2) providing clinical faculty and experiences; and 3) developing a clinical knowledge base. These recommendations are particularly important to the implementation of this model.

The Activity Levels of the Internship

Reactive Level. The pre-entry level, or "reactivity" stage, is roughly analogous to the apprenticeship role described by Davies in 1962. Its importance cannot be underestimated. Observation and self-assessment characterize the activities of this level. The potential candidate is placed in a practical setting for a trial period to observe and reflect on administrative practice and to "test the fit" of the candidate to further pursue administrative preparation. To be effective, competent role models who are able to demonstrate effective goal-setting, decision-making, and leadership skills must be available to the candidate.

An accompanying introductory seminar may include activities which : 1) increase student awareness of effective leadership skills and their impact on schools; 2) assess the social, psychological, and interpersonal characteristics of the candidate; and 3) provide a setting in which the responses and concerns of the

candidate to field observation can be addressed. It is expected that the mature learner will link the behaviors observed in others (both practicing administrators and members of their cohort) to the assessment of social/psychological/interpersonal predispositions to leadership. In other words, the candidate observes behavior and notes actions taken in the practical setting. S/he reacts in the field and in the seminar by questioning, analyzing, and integrating the observed administrative behaviors in terms of an assessment of self in an attempt to determine if, in fact, a leadership role in administration is his/her goal. Those candidates who choose to continue then move beyond introductory coursework.

Interactive level. The interactive level requires coordinated interaction between administrative coursework and field experience. In this mid-cycle level, the candidate is involved in a specific project (or series of projects) related to a particular administrative position (or series of positions). The candidate intensifies his participation in field experiences through activities specifically designed to coordinate with formal knowledge development. Emphasis at this stage is placed on the relationship between that which s/he does in the field and that which s/he learns

in coursework. All six principles described by Knowles should be applied, including the opportunity for learner involvement in the design of his/her learning experiences and activities.

The accompanying seminar provides the arena for interaction among the cohort group with emphasis on increasing socialization to administrative roles and understanding linkages between theory and practice. Effective integration of theory and practice for students is likely to depend on the guidance and coordination of university and clinical faculty, as well as the quality and intensity of field activities, simulations, and case study analyses. These experiential learning activities must be combined with and guided by theoretical knowledge for two reasons: 1) practical experiences provide the student with the relevance and motivation for understanding theory; and 2) practical experiences provide members of the seminar with an opportunity to apply theory to problem-solving situations and work life experiences.

Active Level. The final level represents the most active phase of field experience on the part of the student. It is roughly analogous to Davies' description of the culminating internship. It is characterized by an intensive, comprehensive, and long-term practical

experience. In this phase, administrative interns will assume full or nearly full responsibilities for a given administrative role. (This experience may extend over a period of one to three years and fulfill the first of a two-tiered licensure program suggested by the Commission report.)

This phase is again accompanied by one or more seminars in which professors "team up" with administrative interns to actively and colleagially engage in reflection and assessment of theory, research, and practice. These seminars may also be used to promote field-based research activities under the guidance of seminar faculty. Such an arrangement encourages continual growth in the field experience, contributes to the knowledge base in educational administration, and encourages active dialogue and collaboration between researchers and practitioners.

Implications for the Field of Educational Administration

This model holds several implications for the field of educational administration. For example, the Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (1987) urges that public schools become full partners in the preparation of educational administrators. Through integrated field experiences, schools necessarily become the "laboratory" for concepts taught throughout

coursework and formal knowledge preparation, thereby increasing public school involvement in administrator preparation. Also, administrator preparation programs with several field experiences interwoven with coursework, accompanied by opportunites for reflection and integration in on-going seminars, may have more credibility with local school districts as leadership "producers" than preparation programs with only one culminating internship experience.

Furthermore, literature in teacher education over the last fifteen years has consistently encouraged a greater number of contact hours for pre-service teacher trainees (Cookston, personal interview, 1988). This same recommendation may well apply for pre-service educational administrator trainees. In fact, there is currently some evidence that modification of the present "one-shot" short-term internship is emerging. For instance, one project of the Northwest consortium, aimed at increasing the linkage between universities and school districts (Olson, 1987), reports an attempt at lengthier internships.

In addition, the implementation of an initial "reactive" phase of field experiences to help assess candidates' interest in and predisposition to leadership may encourage "self-selection" of administrative

candidates who have a significant professional commitment to administration. The result may be a decrease in the number of educational administration students who are simply trying to "get out of the classroom".

Also, this model is designed to develop and socialize the educational leader through integrated field experiences while in the preparatory program. As a result, present "leadership academies" and "principal centers" may have less focus on the "development" of leadership skills and more focus on the "renewal" or "enhancement" of leadership among practicing administrators.

Finally, if a major goal of the field of educational administration is to provide a better "interface" of theory, research, and practice, a structure that interweaves field experience with content knowledge may be more salient than a structure with only one culminating field experience. Preparation programs utilizing principles of adult learning such as learner-involvement, maturation and development, reflective thinking, and experiential learning may enhance the "theory-research-practice" relationship as the relevance and applicability of coursework is related to practice.

Similarly, research efforts of universities may be enhanced by increased linkages with the field.

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to suggest a model for an integrated internship experience based on principles of adult learning theory. This integrated model reflects many of the recommendations for administrator preparation voiced by the recent report of the Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (1987), and provides a conceptual or theoretical framework from which to build and revise future administrator preparation experiences. Further, this internship model is designed to integrate the formal knowledge preparation of administrators with relevant practical experiences, providing opportunities for reflection of and socialization to the field. Although implementation of an integrated internship program would require a strong commitment to program revision on the part of universities and participating school districts, adult learning theory suggests that this integrated learning experience may provide more meaningful and effective methods for training future administrators and enhance the identification and development of educational leaders from the field.

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